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GOD'S TENTH.

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In touching the question of giving, we touch the most vital point pertaining to the consecration and spiritual power of the Church. In saying this, we speak from experience, as we certainly speak according to Scripture. "*Bring ye all the tithes* into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Here, plainly, the giving of tithes is made the condition of an abundant outpouring of the Spirit. The spiritualizing method of interpreting Scripture, which robs us of so much vital truth by frittering away its meaning in metaphor and simile, has often

robbed us of the real significance or this text. Prayer, testimony, effort, self-denial, —how often do we hear these duties mentioned as summing up and fulfilling the requirement of tithes! But "tithes" means money or other property of equivalent value; and the effusion of God's Spirit is here made contingent upon bringing in these tithes, and paying up these dues to God. A tenth of his income was required of the Jew to be set apart, and sacredly devoted to God's treasury. And this was the first tenth, and not the last tenth; the *first-fruits*, not the *dregs and leavings*. And while the amount is not specified in the New Testament, the same principle is carried over. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). Here is *consecrated giving*,—laying by in store,—a certain sum set apart, and made sacred to God's use, and which thereafter one should no more think of using for himself than he would think of taking the same sum from his neighbor's pocket. And here is *proportion-*

ate giving,—"as God hath prospered him." Ought the proportion to be any less under the gospel than under the law? Surely not when we remember that we have as our exemplar One who, "*though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor*, that we, through his poverty, might be rich;" and that we have the precept of this exemplar, which no ingenuity can explain away, "*Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath* cannot be my disciple." In the light of such high standards, who can say that at least we ought not to give one-tenth of our income to the Lord? If any Christian who has never tried it will make the experiment, conscientiously following it through to the end in prosperity and in adversity, we predict for him two surprises. First, he will be astonished at the increased amount which he is enabled by this method to give to the Lord; and, secondly, he will be astonished at the increased spiritual and temporal prosperity which the Lord will give to him. For observe that here is an instance where the Lord actually makes a challenge to his people,

and sets up a test case, saying, "*Prove me now.*" Taking this scripture in connection with others, we find that there are two points to be demonstrated.

1. That faithful and proportionate giving will be rewarded with superabundant spiritual blessing. The statement does not require proof, since experience has stamped it already as an axiom. Other things being equal, that Christian who opens the broadest outlet for charity will find the widest inlet for the Spirit. The health of a human body depends upon its exhalations as well as upon its inhalations. It is reported that a boy who was to personate a shining cherub in a play, on being covered over with a coating of gold-leaf, which entirely closed the pores of the skin, died in consequence, before relief could be afforded. Woe to the Christian who gets so gold-leafed over with his wealth, that the pores of his sympathy are shut, and the outgoings of his charity restrained! He is thenceforth dead spiritually, though he may have a name to live.

2. That faithful and proportionate giv-

ing will be rewarded with abundant temporal prosperity. This is a saying hard to be received, but it has the emphatic support of Scripture. "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: *so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine*" (Prov. iii. 9, 10). This is but one specimen of many from the Old Testament. "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom*" (Luke vi. 38). Do we believe these words of our Lord? and can we question that they refer to abundant temporal returns in recompense for abundant giving?

Let us now throw light upon this subject from a few inserted leaves from a pastor's note-book.

One says,—

"I knew a widow of limited means who was remarkable for her liberality to benevolent objects. But a sad change came into her life by an unexpected legacy which made her wealthy, and then her contribu-

tions began to fall below the amount of her straitened finances. Once she volunteered; now she only gives when importuned, and then it is as meagre as if the fountains of gratitude had dried up. Once when asked by her pastor to help a cause dear to her heart in her comparative poverty, and to which she gave five dollars then, now she proffers twenty-five cents. Her pastor called her attention to the surprising and ominous change. 'Ah!' she said, '*when day by day I looked to God for my bread, I had enough to spare: now I have to look to my ample income, and I am all the time haunted with the fear of losing it and coming to want. I had the guinea heart when I had the shilling means: now I have the guinea means and the shilling heart.*' It is a fearful risk to heart and soul, to become suddenly rich. This is one of the reasons why God lets many of his best children acquire wealth so slowly, so that it may not be a snare to them, may not chill their benevolence; that, when wealth comes, the fever of ambitious grasping may be cooled, and that benevolence may overtake avarice."

Now, the only way to avoid this peril is to cultivate two habits, and let them grow side by side,—the habit of economy and the habit of charity. If one's economy grows steadily and alone, it will tend to dry up his charity; if one's charity grows steadily, it will dry up his means, unless balanced by the other virtue of economy. Therefore let both grow together, then our giving will increase just in proportion to our getting.

But let us introduce another illustration furnished from a pastor's observation:—

"A parishioner, who was a dear friend, read his pastor a page from life's history to this effect: When a small boy, he gave his heart to Christ. He was engaged in a brickyard to carry clay, often on his head, for twenty-five cents a day. Then he vowed that one-tenth of his income he would give to his God. This he conscientiously did, and prosperity followed until his income was $10,000; and then the trial of his life came, in which he went down in financial disaster. He would not give one-tenth of $10,000 Here his faith balked.

He said, 'After disaster had swept all away, I learned what I had not known before,—that it is easier to give one-tenth of $72 than of $10,000. A man is truer to God who works for twenty-five cents a day, and has less temptations and more strength to meet them, whose income is $6 a month, than $833⅓.' He regained wealth, but it was in strict compliance with the vow of his youth, which his disaster enabled him to fulfil until his death."

Here is an instance of negative proof: viz., that "there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." The positive proof would no doubt fill volumes, were it written out.

There is a Christian league in this country, banded together to promote systematic giving. It brings every member into covenant to keep a strict account with the Lord, and to render him one-tenth of the income. An annual report is made by each member, giving a statement of his business and spiritual prosperity. The secretary recently told us that the results have been surprising even to the most sanguine advo-

cates of the tithing system; that not only has the income of the missionary societies receiving the funds been greatly increased, but that, out of thousands entering into this league, all but two or three have reported greatly increased business prosperity. Are there not some things to be proved which we have not yet dreamed of either in our philosophy or our mathematics?

We give another instance from a well-known life. We find the statement in print, and believe, from what we have heard, that it is substantially correct:—

"Many years ago a lad of sixteen years left home to seek his fortune. All his worldly possessions were tied up in a bundle, which he carried in his hand. As he trudged along, he met an old neighbor, the captain of a canal-boat; and the following conversation took place, which changed the whole current of the boy's life:—

"'Well, William, where are you going?'

"'I don't know,' he answered; 'father is too poor to keep me at home any longer,

and says I must now make a living for myself.'

"'There's no trouble about that,' said the captain. 'Be sure you start right, and you'll get along finely.'

"William told his friend that the only trade he knew anything about was soap and candle making, at which he had helped his father while at home.

"'Well,' said the old man, 'let me pray with you once more, and give you a little advice, and then I will let you go.'

"They both kneeled down upon the tow-path (the path along which the horses which drew the canal-boat walked); the dear old man prayed earnestly for William, and then gave this advice: 'Some one will soon be the leading soap-maker in New York. It can be you as well as any one. I hope it may. Be a good man; give your heart to Christ; give the Lord all that belongs to him of every dollar you earn; make an honest soap; give a full pound; and I am certain you will yet be a prosperous and rich man.'

"When the boy arrived in the city he

found it hard to get work. Lonesome, and far from home, he remembered his mother's words and the last words of the canal-boat captain. He was then, there, led to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' and united with the church. He remembered his promise to the old captain, and the first dollar he earned brought up the question of the Lord's part. In the Bible he found that the Jews were commanded to give one-tenth: so he said, 'If the Lord will take one-tenth, I will give that.' And so he did; ten cents of every dollar were sacred to the Lord.

"Having regular employment, he soon became a partner; and after a few years his partners died, and William became the sole owner of the business.

"He now resolved to keep his promise to the old captain; he made an honest soap, gave a full pound, and instructed his book-keeper to open an account with the Lord, and carry one-tenth of all his income to that account. He prospered; his business grew; his family was blessed; his soap sold, and he grew rich faster than he

had ever hoped. He then gave the Lord two-tenths, and prospered more than ever; then he gave three-tenths, then four-tenths, then five-tenths.

"He educated his family, settled all his plans for life, and gave all his income to the Lord. He prospered more than ever.

"This is the story of Mr. William Colgate, who has given millions of dollars to the Lord's cause, and left a name that will never die."

Perhaps in these instances may be found the true solution of a great question: How shall we get the means to give the gospel to a lost world? It is no longer a question of men to go, but of money with which to send them. And the money is in the hands of Christ's professed disciples,—enough and more than enough for all demands. If wrong habit has shut up their hearts that they cannot be persuaded to give it, let us try at least to educate the next generation differently. And may it not be that the best system of education which can be devised is this of training Christians to set apart one-tenth of their income for

the treasury of the Lord?—*Baptist Missionary Magazine.*

MY SAVIOUR.

Under an Eastern sky,
Amid a rabble cry,
A man went forth to die
For me!

Thorn-crowned his blessed head,
Blood-stained his weary tread,
Cross-laden, on he sped
For me!

Pierced were his hands and feet,
Three hours o'er him beat
Fierce rays of noon-tide heat
For me!

Thus wert thou made all mine;
Lord make me wholly thine.
Grant grace and strength divine
To me!

In thought and word and deed
Thy will to do, O lead my soul,
E'en though it bleed,
To Thee!

"THE MISSIONARY CALL."

BY REV. NATHAN BROWN.

My soul is not at rest. There comes a strange
And secret whisper to my spirit, like
A dream of night, that tells me I am on
Enchanted ground. Why live I here? The vows
Of God are on me, and I may not stop
To play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers,
Till I my work have done, and rendered up
Account. The voice of my departed Lord:
"Go teach all nations," from the Eastern world
Comes on the night air and awakes my ear.

And I will go. I may no longer doubt
To give up friends, and home, and idol hopes,
And every tender tie that binds my heart
To thee, my country! Why should I regard
Earth's little store of borrowed sweets? I sure
Have had enough of bitter in my cup
To show that never was it His design
Who placed me here, that I should live in ease
Or drink at pleasure's fountain. Henceforth, then,
It matters not if storm or sunshine be
My earthly lot, bitter or sweet my cup;
I only pray, God fit me for the work;
God make me holy, and my spirit nerve

For the stern hour of strife. Let me but know
There is an arm unseen that holds me up,
An eye that kindly watches all my path,
Till I my weary pilgrimage have done;
Let me but know I have a Friend that waits
To welcome me to glory, and I joy
To tread the dark and death-fraught wilderness.

And when I come to stretch me for the last,
In unattended agony beneath
The cocoa's shade, or lift my dying eyes
From Afric's burning sand, it will be sweet
That I have toiled for other worlds than this.
I know I shall feel happier than to die
On softer bed. And if I should reach heaven—
If one that hath so deeply, darkly sinned—
If one whom ruin and revolt have held
With such a fearful grasp—if one for whom
Satan hath struggled as he hath for me—
Should ever reach that blessed shore, O how
This heart will glow with gratitude and love!
And through the ages of eternal years,
Thus saved, my spirit never shall repent
That toil and suffering once were mine below.

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